

L2-3day3

Early Byzantine Art in the Age of Justinian

Art Discussed:

The Hagia Sophia 532-537AD

San Vitale 526-547 AD

Justinian and Attendants 547 AD

Theodora and Attendants 547 AD

VOCAB:

Cathedral

Pendentive

Squinch

HW:

Activity Sheet

Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

- Combination of central plan and axial plan
- Exterior: plain and massive, little decoration
- Altar at far end, but emphasis placed over the area covered by the dome
- Dome supported by pendentives
- Powerful central dome, with forty windows at base
- Cornice unifies space
- Arcade decoration: wall and capitals are flat and thin but richly ornamented
- Great fields for mosaic decoration

- At one time had four acres of gold mosaics on walls
- Many windows punctuate wall space
- Minarets added in Islamic period

San Vitale, Ravenna

- 8 sided structure
- Plain exterior except porch added later in Renaissance
- Large windows for illuminating interior designs
- Interior has thin columns and open arched spaces
- Sense of mystery in the space

Justinian and Attendants

- To his left the clergy, to his right the military
- Dressed in royal purple and gold
- Symmetry, frontality
- Holds a plate for the host, or perhaps a golden bowl
- Slight impression of procession forward
- No volume of figures, seem to float, and yet step on each other's feet
- No background to set the figures in space
- No landscape, gold background indicates timelessness
- Maximianus identified, patron of San Vitale
- Halo indicates saintliness

Theodora and Attendants

- Hieratic composition
- Slight displacement of absolute symmetry with Theodora
- Sumptuously executed
- She holds a chalice for the ceremony and is about to go behind the curtain
- Altar boys and ladies at court accompany her